



Bay Area Dioxins Project



Association of Bay Area
Governments

Summary of Discussions TASK FORCE MEETING March 28, 2002

Attending the meeting were:

Michelle Buzbee, LWA+

Betsy Elzufon, LWA+

Pamela Evans, Alameda County*

John Katz, EPA Region 9

Jennifer Krebs, ABAG Staff*

Niko Letunic, City of Oakland*

Michael McMillan, Port of Oakland*

Kelly Moran, TDC Environmental+

Debbie Raphael, City/County of San Francisco*

Katie Silberman, Center for Environmental Health +

Michael Smith, ABAG Staff

Julie Weiss, City of Palo Alto*

(+ Task Force consultant, * Task Force member)

Welcome/Introductions

Jennifer Krebs convened the meeting and welcomed Task Force members. The Summary of Discussions for the January 22, 2002 Dioxins Task Force meeting were distributed.

Public Comment Period - Speakers

- No members of the public were present.

Information Sharing

Pam Evans stated that Alameda County passed their Persistent Bioaccumulative and Toxics (PBT) resolution in January. County departments and agencies will hold their first meeting in April to begin to develop strategies for implementing the resolution.

Julie Weiss noted that she is involved with the Pacific Coast Roundtable and that they may be a good resource to follow. The group is working on a sustainability project - evaluating the economic, environmental, and social costs of product lines.

John Katz stated that Pollution Prevention Incentives for States funding would be available soon. Agencies and departments involved with the State should look into applying for funds when they are available. He also stated that the National Dioxins Reassessment Study should be ready in about six months for review by Federal agencies and departments. The workplan for regulating dioxins will not be finalized until after the reassessment study has been finalized.

Katie Silberman noted that a documentary, Blue Vinyl, on the vinyl industry would be released soon. Blue Vinyl will be shown on HBO in May and there may be several local screenings of the documentary at public interest meetings.

Purchasing Preference Project Update

Michelle Buzbee and Betsy Elzufon gave the update for the Purchasing Preference Project. Michelle stated that they had compiled the results of the purchasing preference survey participating jurisdictions received before, and at, the January 22nd Task Force meeting.

Michelle and Betsy distributed a number of documents updating the Task Force on the progress of the Purchasing Preference Project. The first document was a List of Deliverables that detailed the final products that the Task Force would receive as part of this project. The second document distributed to the group was a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) paper under development for the paper purchasing portion of the project. The members of the Task Force found the FAQ to be informative and look forward to the final product. A report called Cooperative Purchasing Opportunities for Buying PCF Copy Paper was then distributed to the Task Force. This report is the result of research into Bay Area paper purchasing pools that carry PCF paper. The information included the types/brand of paper sold, the group purchases are made through, pricing, and information on the delivery method used. Finally, a handout on the suggestion of the Laguna Honda Hospital reconstruction project as a PVC alternatives case study and a matrix of PVC free building materials, developed by Tom Lent of the Healthy Building Network (HBN), were distributed.

There was a discussion related to the claim that paper alternatives may jam copy machines. John Katz gave a story about a lesson learned by the EPA when they switched to a new paper for their offices. He stated that copy machines are calibrated for the type of paper that an organization usually gets and that changes in the brand of paper purchased often lead to the problem of jamming. Once the machines are recalibrated, the new paper works without a problem. He went on to say that there was an order mix-up and the agency accidentally ordered their old paper after the recalibration and that it then jammed since the copiers were set for the new paper type. The Task Force considered this to be useful information to have as the fear that new types of paper will not work are often cited as reasons for not changing existing purchasing preferences. Betsy said that the FAQ would be updated to include the information that came out of the discussion on the issue of paper jamming.

There was a short discussion on the alternative of starting a new purchasing pool. The Task Force discussed the options of waiting for full participation of members before seeking bids or having the largest jurisdiction solicit bids and have the smaller jurisdictions buy into the pool at the price the larger jurisdiction was able to obtain. There was also discussion related to contract restrictions for some jurisdictions and how that may affect their ability to take part in a purchasing pool. The Task Force decided that it would be best to try and join an existing paper purchasing pool and that jurisdictions with more restrictive requirements would have all the same information as the others and could submit requests for bids from the various sources identified through the consultant's research.

There was also a brief discussion about coming up with an alternative description of paper processed without chlorine, as PCF paper is a trademark of the Chlorine Free Products Association. The fact sheet will describe the bleaching alternatives and reference what the trademark means.

Michelle moved on to discuss the PVC aspect of the purchasing preference project. She proposed using the Laguna Honda Hospital (San Francisco) reconstruction project as a PVC case study. The project is at a good stage in the process as the design specifications are currently being developed. HBN is currently working with the City to determine vendor availability for alternative products/materials and the ability of contractors to work with the alternatives. Michelle stated that the PVC Free Building Material Alternatives Matrix from HBN would serve as a great resource for the Task Force and proposed that she assist in building up

the matrix as part of the case study. Kelly Moran recommended contacting the HBN about their copyrighted materials and if and how we could use them.

The Task Force gave Michelle and Betsy the following direction:

- Focus on researching existing purchasing pools for copy paper.
- Research the availability of PCF toilet paper vendors to deliver in large quantities.
- Include a disclaimer similar to one used by HBN on product alternative matrices developed for the Task Force.

Medical Waste Project Update

Kelly Moran started by distributing a list of hospital contacts developed by Center for Environmental Health (CEH). Kelly sorted the original list and each member received a list of contacts based on the county where their jurisdiction is located.

Since the last Task Force meeting, Kelly met with the environmental health staff from Stericycle at a Healthcare Pollution Prevention Project meeting. Stericycle is the company that now has an effective monopoly in the off-site disposal of medical waste in the Bay Area. Stericycle staff confirmed that they are shutting down the IES incinerator and that the facility will be dismantled (this was the last medical waste incinerator in the Bay Area). All Bay Area medical waste will now be autoclaved, primarily at facilities in Fresno, California or incinerated, primarily at Stericycle facilities in Salt Lake City, Utah. The company is working on opening a new autoclave facility in San Leandro.

Kelly stated that it is likely that Stericycle will increase disposal costs for area hospitals, particularly incineration costs, and that these cost increases may serve as an incentive for hospitals to convert to alternatives to reduce the amount of waste they produce. On-site autoclave treatment is substantially less expensive than using an off-site waste handler. Kelly went on to say that it seems that Stericycle has a waste handling strategy that parallels the goals of the Task Force in that it seeks to shift customers from incineration to autoclaving (for wastes not required to be incinerated) and that it has a corporate strategy to move to a “flat fee for waste service” model that encourages waste reduction, but wanted direction on what kind of relationship the Task Force should develop with Stericycle given its monopoly status and the fact that its major competition is lower-cost on-site medical treatment.

The Task Force gave Kelly the following direction:

- Keep a balanced approach so that information is given for both on- and off-site treatment alternatives.

Diesel Alternatives Project Update

Kelly Moran stated that there were no updates on the status of the Diesel Alternatives Project.

Conference/Workshop

Jennifer Krebs postponed discussion of the conference/workshop and vendor fair, as there was not enough time for meaningful discussion of the events.

Budget, Work Plan Update

Jennifer Krebs presented an update of the budget that reflected a recent grant the Dioxins Project received from the Alameda County Waste Management Authority (for the upcoming conference/workshop and vendor fair).

Public Comment Period - Speakers

- No members of the public were present.

Adjournment

Next meetings:

- April 24, 2002, 8:30am, ABAG Office, Conference Room B (conference/workshop and vendor fair discussions)
- May 22, 2002, 10:00am, ABAG Office, Conference Room B

Attachment 1

Bay Area Dioxins Project Draft Budget & Workplan July 02 to Feb 03	
Projected Budget	
Palo Alto	3000
Alameda County	2000
Berkeley	6000
Port of Oakland	5000
Oakland	3000
San Francisco	
<i>PBT grant (continued)</i>	
<i>Community Liaison grant (continued)</i>	
Al Co WMA Grant	5000
	24000
Projected Workplan	
TF meetings - July, Sept, November, January - coordination and facilitation	3000
2 conferences - one on Dioxins 101 and one vendor fair	15000
Prepare Final Report	1500
Present Report to LGO?, EB, put on website	1000
Misc - consultant participation in meetings	3500
	24000

This assumes a project “end date” of the end of 2002. Final reporting into 2003.